

Public submission

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Submission to the Independent Forestry Panel

Peter Cooper

1. Sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW

I agree with the many submissions that want an end to native forest logging. I live beside the Bulga Forest where remnants of the once majestic tall wet eucalypt forests and 'Brush' rainforest and ancient life species that live in these forests are being destroyed—critically important ecological habitat is being annihilated. These forests have been logged too much for too long in a relentless pursuit of merchantisable timber. The logging that is happening right now is so seriously and stupidly wrong it is almost beyond comprehension.

Native forest logging industry is not sustainable. Native forest logging occurs in areas of high conservation value for threatened species. Logging significantly reduces critical habitat for species such as large old hollow-bearing trees and changes the composition of forests that make them unsuitable for leaf-feeding specialist animals like the Koala and Greater Glider.

Native forestry operations are not sustainable on economic, environmental or social grounds. The Forestry Corporation has lost its social licence.

2. Environmental and cultural values of forests, including threatened species and Aboriginal cultural heritage values

As David Lindenmayer says Native forests have significant environmental values, values for threatened species and substantial cultural heritage values for First Nations peoples. Many of these values can be degraded by logging operations. One of the straight-forward ways to maintain these values and not degrade them is by not logging native forests (Murray et al. 2024).

3. Demand for timber products, particularly as relates to NSW housing, construction, mining, transport and retail

Demands for timber can largely be met from plantations and have been increasingly so for many years. A transition to a plantation-only industry can meet timber requirements.

4. The future of softwood and hardwood plantations and the continuation of Private Native Forestry in helping meet timber supply needs

I agree with David Lindenmayer that the future of the forest and timber industries in NSW is in plantations. The plantation industry is far more profitable, employs far more people, generates fewer GHG emissions, and is significantly less fire-prone.

5. The role of State Forests in maximising the delivery of a range of environmental, economic and social outcomes and options for diverse management, including Aboriginal forest management models

As David Lindenmayer says native forests have significant environmental values, values for threatened species (Ward et al. 2024), and substantial cultural heritage values for First Nations peoples (Gott 2005). Many of these values can be degraded by logging operations.

6. Opportunities to realise carbon and biodiversity benefits and support carbon and biodiversity markets, and mitigate and adapt to climate change risks, including the greenhouse gas emission impacts of different uses of forests and assessment of climate change risks to forests.

As David Lindenmayer says, “Intact native forests store significantly more carbon than logged and regenerated native forests (Keith et al. 2014). Native forest logging generates large amounts of emissions. Indeed, a key way to reach Australia’s 2030 GHG reduction targets will be to stop native forest logging (<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/8740433/ending-native-forest-logging-key-to-emissions-reduction-experts/>). Increased carbon storage in intact native forests can be included in State and National carbon accounts. Carbon does not have to be traded to show benefits. The biodiversity benefits of intact native forests have been well documented (Mackey et al. 2015, Watson et al. 2018). The best way to maintain the biodiversity values of native forests is to stop logging them.”